

## TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL – EXTERNAL COMMITTEE

### CINEMA FOCUS GROUP

#### MINUTES OF A MEETING ON 7<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2018

**Present:** Cllr. Mike Carter, Cllr. Sue Ferguson (Chair), Claire Gilbert (Deputy Town Clerk), Tom Evans, Paul Hale, Chris Head, Elaine Mahoney, Carol Parkin, Fran Sharp, Bob Somerscales and Wilfred Watters.

- 1. Chair of Focus Group.** Cllrs. Mike Carter and Sue Ferguson reported that other Town Councillors felt that Councillors should not chair focus group meetings. However, the Cinema Focus Group agreed that Cllr. Sue Ferguson should Chair this meeting.
- 2. Apologies for Absence.** Nic Phillips and Lindsay Phillips.
- 3. Minutes** of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 were agreed.
- 4. Matters Arising.** None.
- 5. Discussion of Site Options Appraisal/Next Stage.**
  - 5.1 Sue Ferguson reported how impressive the study was, of high quality and agreed with the recommendations; the Group agreed with this view.
  - 5.2 Tom Evans suggested that the Group went through the Appraisal and looked at each venue.
  - 5.3 Chris Head raised the issue that if the Group agreed that the Pebbles was the best venue, then it would need the full endorsement of the Town Council and that a clear proposal would need to be presented to them.
  - 5.4 Mike Carter reported that the Council were prepared to spend up to 550,000 on the Pebbles anyway, whether it is as a 'black box' for a cinema or turned into flats and shop/office space.
  - 5.5 Sue Ferguson indicated that the Group would need to find out how much Stage 3 would cost and whether this included pre-application advice from Ashford Borough Council, particularly around internal changes and listed building advice.
  - 5.6 Chris Head reported that the side of the Pebbles needed to be looked at, which was the direct access to the Millennium Garden. It was currently in a poor state with waste pipes visible and required improvement. This was also the right of way to the Boxing Club. It was suggested that Ron Inglis could be asked whether the Millennium Garden could be included in the business plan. Claire Gilbert reported that the Garden was a Community Garden and this would need to be taken into account.
  - 5.7 Mike Carter reported that Cllr. Justin Nelson had produced a report from a conference he had attended around the changing High Streets. Sue

Ferguson reported that there was an article in the Financial Times regarding High Streets. It was agreed that both documents should be circulated the Group. It was agreed that Ashford Borough Council's (ABC) support was needed with regard to High Street regeneration and it was suggested that Cllr. Bill Barrett of ABC should be sent the documents mentioned above as well as invite him to the next Cinema Focus Group meeting. Sue also mentioned that it would be good to get Cllr. Gerry Clarkson (Leader at ABC) involved.

- 5.8 It was agreed that Claire Gilbert would contact Stefanie Fischer to find out what Stage 3 includes, particularly pre-application advice, the cost of Stage 3 and also whether advice on bridging funding gaps is included. The idea of including the Millennium Garden in the business plan would be suggested and whether the corridor can be included or has to remain separate.
- 5.9 Finance. Tom Evans raised the issue of looking at financing a cinema.
  - 5.9.1 Mike Carter indicated that there would be a 950,000 deficit after the Town Council's input of 550,000.
  - 5.9.2 Chris Head reported that the finance, development of the site and talking to the operators all needed to run in parallel.
  - 5.9.3 Paul Hale suggested that input from cinema providers needs to happen early on in the process.
  - 5.9.4 Mike Carter suggested that Ron Inglis might be able to obtain estimates to bridge the gap in funding. Tom Evans suggested looking at other funding options, i.e. ABC, Kent County Council or private investors. Tom asked the question as to whether the Town Council sees itself as the owner of the cinema. Mike Carter responded that the Town Council could lease the building to a Community Interest Company, who would then sublease to a cinema provider.
  - 5.9.5 Sue suggested that a meeting should take place between three members of the Focus Group and Cllr. Bill Barrett at ABC to find out the possibility of funding. It was agreed that a copy of the proposal should be sent to him.
  - 5.9.6 Paul Hale reported that Picturehouse like to be involved at the early stages of development. Tom Evans reported that Kino had paid 500,000 to fit out Rye. It was agreed that operators need to be approached as soon as possible and ask each of them what form might their participation take.
  - 5.9.7 Tom Evans suggested that confirmation is sought as to whether pre-application advice is included in Stage 3. Tom reported that at some point the Group would need to explore perks for investors, which could include rights for seats. Fran Sharp reported that Kino do initial investment perks.
  - 5.9.8 Chris Head reported that the Town Council would need to view any money invested as a constant form of revenue. It cannot be compared to any of the other regeneration projects. It was agreed that Chris would produce a

discussion document for the Town Council to consider in conjunction with the Stage 3 proposal.

5.9.9 Both Elaine Mahoney and Carol Parkin were concerned that no monies from Tent1 were being used for the cinema, but being used on other projects. Mike Carter responded that the Group needed to take into account the 550,000 that the Town Council would be spending on the Pebbles, in addition to providing the million pound Pebbles building as the venue.

5.9.10 Tom Evans highlighted the jobs created from the cinema and asked whether any monies come in for this. Mike Carter responded that this could be brought up with Michelle Byrne (Grants & Funding) at ABC via the Town Clerk.

**6. Any Other Business.** The Group thanked Wilfred Watters for putting the Group in touch with Stefanie Fischer, which has proved a great success.

**7. Date of Next Meeting.** To be arranged for the end of August in order to put together the recommendations to the External Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2018; Cllr. Bill Barrett will be invited to attend.